



City of Yakima

NEWS RELEASE

Subject: Yakima Trolleys Celebration

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Yakima Trolleys Selah Run Centennial Celebration on Track

Yakima Valley Trolleys (“YVT”), a volunteer organization that operates the last intact interurban electric railroad in the U.S., will celebrate the 100th anniversary, to the day, of the first trolley run from Yakima to Selah with a ceremony on **Friday, June 21st at 10:00 am** at the YVT Powerhouse at **3rd Avenue and Pine Street** in Yakima.

Following the brief ceremony at the powerhouse, a group of special guests, including local elected officials and other dignitaries, will board YVT Streetcar No. 1776 for a reenactment of the historical inaugural run to Selah that took place on June 21st, 1913. Along the way, YVT’s first president, Jack Splawn (portrayed by an actor), will regale the crowd with stories about the line’s fascinating history. After arriving in Selah, trolley riders will be treated to a picnic lunch and another brief ceremony before reboarding the trolley and returning to Yakima.

Making a run to Selah to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the first trolley trip between Yakima and its neighbor to the north had been in doubt. Several years ago, thieves began stealing the copper electric wires needed to power YVT streetcars and selling them as scrap.

A plan to replace the electric wires between YVT’s Trolley Barn on 3rd Avenue and Pine Street in Yakima to the end of its tracks near Downtown Selah hit a snag earlier this year due to construction at Davis High School that resulted in YVT tracks being temporarily blocked. Without access to the tracks, YVT volunteers couldn’t complete the work necessary to get the line back up and running.

The solution came in the form of a “power car” that has been loaned to YVT by Issaquah Valley Trolley. In 2001 and 2002, YVT provided one of its trolleys to Issaquah Valley Trolley when that Western Washington organization was first formed. The power car, which runs on diesel, will generate the electricity needed to power YVT Streetcar No. 1776 on its round trip from Yakima to Selah and back.

“The power car is a bit noisy, and it may generate some smoke, but it will get the job done,” said YVT President Ken Johnsen. “The people of Yakima owe a debt of gratitude to Issaquah Valley Trolley for letting us borrow the power car so the celebration of the very first run between Yakima and Selah can go ahead as planned. They really saved the day,” said Johnsen.

The general public will be able to ride the Yakima to Selah line on Saturday, June 22nd and Sunday, June 23rd. The one-and-a-half hour trip will cost \$8 for adults and \$6 for kids and seniors. Trolleys will leave the YVT barn at 3rd Avenue and Pine Street at 10:00 am, 12:00 pm, 2:00 pm both Saturday and Sunday.

YVT trolleys have run intermittently since the theft of the line’s electric wires began in 2005. Through the dedication of YVT volunteers, replacement wire, along with an alarm system to prevent future thefts, will soon be installed and the line will once again be able to offer riders a unique opportunity to take a trip back in time.

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